William Donald Schaefer **Governor**

> Jacqueline H. Rogers Secretary, DHCD

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY/DISTRICT MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM
TRUST Property/District Name: County Honce Almshouse Survey Number: BA-73 Project: Handicap Accessibility Agency: CDBG-Balt.Co.
Site visit by MHT Staff: pate Date
Eligibility recommended Eligibility not recommended
Criteria:ABCD Considerations:ABCDEFGNone
Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map) Under Criterion A: The Country Home Almohouse derives its significance from its association with the latablishment of almohouses in Balt. Co. as a last resort for the poor from c. 1773 through 1873 when this, the final Country Almohouse was built. This Imshouse continued in operation until 1958. Under Criterion C: The Almohouse is significant for its architectural character, athough the
Under Criterion C: The Almshouse is significant for its architectural character, atthough the building did suffer substantially from the tributed as fire in 1919, and that of its surviving "Posthouse". Together these buildings reflect life in a Maryland almshouse of the 19th century.
Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Letter & Protes from Angles Sunday III Balt. Co. 10/17/90 A Md. Inventory

Date Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services ___ not applicable NR program concurrence: Reviewer, NR program

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

ı.	Geographic Region:					
	Western Shore Piedmont	(all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil) (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's) (Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery) (Allegany, Garrett and Washington)				
	Hestern Mary rama	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,				
II.	Chronological/Developmental Pe	eriods:				
	Paleo-Indian Early Archaic Middle Archaic Late Archaic Early Woodland Middle Woodland Late Woodland/Archaic Contact and Settlement Rural Agrarian Intensification Agricultural-Industrial Transi Industrial/Urban Dominance Modern Period Unknown Period (prehistor	A.D. 1870-1930 A.D. 1930-Present ic historic)				
III.	Prehistoric Period Themes:	IV. Historic Period Themes:				
	Subsistence Settlement Political Demographic Religion Technology Environmental Adaption	Agriculture Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning Economic (Commercial and Industrial) Government/Law Military Religion Social/Educational/Cultural Transportation				
V. R	esource Type:					
	Category: Building					
	Historic Environment: Rec	ral				
	Historic Function(s) and Use(s	1: Domestic/Institutional Housing				
		V				
	Known Design Source: James C. Harrison, Architect					

Easement on Pest House ONLY

BALTIMORE COUNTY LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION to be reviewed 1/16/79

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

BA-73

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

NAME				
HISTORIC COU	NTY HOME PROPERTY	a. Almshou	se b. Pesti	house
AND/OR COMMON	Upland Home, Agri	culture Build	ling	
LOCATION	V			
STREET & NUMBER	9811 Van Buren La	ine		
CITY, TOWN	Cockeysville _	VICINITY OF	2nd CONGRESSION 3rd Councils COUNTY	manic District
STATE	Maryland		COOKIT	
E CLASSIFIC	CATION		75	
CATEGORY DISTRICT X_BUILDING(S)STRUCTUPESITEOBJECT	OWNERSHIP X_PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH PUBLIC ACQUISITION IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED	STATUS XOCCUPIED A. XUNOCCUPIED B. WORK IN PROGRESS ACCESSIBLE XYES RESTRICTED YES: UNRESTRICTED NO	_AGRICUCOMMEEDUCATENTERT. XGOVERNINDUSTMILITAR	RCIAL X PARK FIONAL PRIVATE RESIDENCE AINMENT RELIGIOUS MENT SCIENTIFIC RIAL TRANSPORTATION
NAME Balti	more County, c/o C: Mr. John L. Wigh	ffice of Cent	ral Services Telephone	#: 494-3855
401 B	osley Avenue		ST	ATE, zip code
CITY. TOWN	n	VICINITY OF		yland 21204
LOCATIO COURTHOUSE. REGISTRY OF DEED	N OF LEGAL DESC		•	EHA 72
STREET & NUMBER	401 Bosley Av	renue		
CITY, TOWN	Towson			ATE yland 21204
REPRESE	N'TATION IN EXIS	TING SURVEY		
TITLE Balti	more County Histor and Historical Tru	cical Sites In	ventory MHT	No. BA 73
DATE On-go	ing since 1964	FEDEP/	X STATE _COUNTY	LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS	21 State Circle			
CITY TOWN	Annapolis			ATE Land 21401

DESCRIPTION

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11:	()	N	11			r.

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

 \underline{X}_{GOOD} (a.)

X DETERIORATED (b.)

__UNEXPOSED

_UNALTERED

XORIGINAL SITE
__MOVED DATE_____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

- a. The Almshouse main building is a T-shaped stone structure with hip roofing and built in a functional style. It is substantially as described in the quotation from the 1873 newspaper presented in the "Significance" section of this report, except for changes resulting from the fire of 1919. The crossbar portion of the T-shaped plan was rebuilt to two full stories plus hip roof with eyebrow attic windows. Its best architectural feature is the semi-eliptical fanlight over the main door. There is a gable-roofed entrance portico, but it is not in regular use. The rebuilt segment is topped by a louvered cupola. The only parts of the building not in good repair are the south and east porches. The south porch is a double-decker with decorative railings and is closed off as unsafe. The rear porch inspires some anxiety but has not been condemned. The dormers described in the 1873 report are intact on the leg segment of the T-plan, having survived the fire. Inside, the new portion features poured-concrete stairs and supporting masonry. The elegant Victorian stairway survives in the untouched part of the building and the stairs, bannisters, and balusters were recently cleaned and revarnished by the historical society. This old part of the building contains various built-in kitchen cabinets; the old bedroom doors still have round peepholes whereby the house manager could look in on his wards. Considerable repainting has been done in the nine rooms assigned to the historical society over 1976-78, the work being done to a great extent by the women of the organization at their own expense.
- b. The Pest House, first listed as such in the 1919 fire report, is a two-story, stone house five bays wide in front and three in back. It is in functional style with gable roof, heavy stone lintels and window sills, and heavy eave-returns. Roofing is of slate. Corners are quoined with large blocks of limestone. This building has been boarded up, but has nonetheless suffered from vandalism.

c. Other Buildings Not Nominated:

- Smokehouse. Solid stone building with one door and gable roof, no windows; located close to east end of almshouse. In good condition. A non-historical frame addition in vertical board is tacked onto east end of smokehouse.
- Farm Museum No. 1. The farm museum of the Baltimore County Historical Society began in this non-historical building of corrugated metal, a former chicken house, east of smokehouse.
- Farm Museum No. 2. In 1978, the farm museum began to expand into a frame garage with a battery of roll-up doors. This structure is southeast of the main almshouse and is covered with composition shingles. It stands on a stone foundation that looks like the

Page 1

Shelving and paneling is still survival of some earlier outbuilding. being installed for museum displays.

Barn, silo, dwellings. The red frame barn is located some distance from the almshouse, separated from it by two contemporary frame cottages for the custodian and staff. The silo, like most silos, is of 20th Century origin.

SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW .						
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	_LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION			
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION .	_LAW	SCIENCE			
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE			
_ 1600-1639	XARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	X SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN			
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER			
X_1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION			
1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY	X-POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	_OTHER (SPECIFY)			
•		_INVENTION	·	•			

1873

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

James C. Harrison

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Almshouses were established in some Maryland Counties as a last resort for the poor as early as 1768. Baltimore County had a series of three such refuges: (a) The first, built c. 1773 about a half-mile outside of Baltimore Town near the present Howard and Biddle Streets; (b) the second was at Calverton in present west Baltimore. That institution served both city and county and consisted of various wings tacked onto the Dennis A. Smith mansion called Calverton, designed as a home in 1815 by Robert Carey Long and amplified by the Trustees of the Poor over 1821-23. City and County split apart in 1851, and the County purchased the Almshouse at Calverton in 1858; the City developed its own facility at Bayview; (c) the third and "final" County almshouse was at Texas. (1)

On April 18, 1871, the Board of County Commissioners offered Calverton for sale at the Baltimore Exchange and it was late laid out in building lots and the main building burned on November 12, 1874—some of that property became the Hebrew Orphanage and still later West Baltimore Hospital. (2)

Much of the proceeds was used to redeem old almshouse bonds. On September 12, of 1871, the Commissioners purchased a new 79-acre site from Dr. John Galloway, who had acquired it in 1859 from Thomas Galloway. The land had been part of Lot 3 in the division of the vast colonial holdings of Thomas Cockey Deye. (3)

County records reveal that a temporary almshouse (possibly the "Pest House") was built "at the Galloway farm" and Thomas Todd was paid for constructing it in 1871. (4) Journals of the Commissioners are not very informative about the project at Texas, although there are references to sums paid for smith's work and a \$551 payment to John Chambers for grading the site. (5)

In 1872, Abraham Cole was appointed keeper of the Almshouse of Baltimore County and his term was renewed a number of times. Dr. H. M. Ewing was appointed physician. (6)

The newspaper description of the main building is so graphic that little else need be reported.

(continued)

BALTIMORE COUNTY'S NEW ALMS HOUSE—ITS EARLY COMPLETION—A SPLENDID BUILDING AND HANDSOME SITE—

The new Alms House erected for the accommodation of the poor of this county is rapidly drawing towards completion, and in a week or so the carpenters and painters will have given the finishing touches, when the buildings will be delivered into the hands of the County Commissioners by the Contractors, Messrs. Codling and Lishear

. . . the present handsome site was purchased of Dr. John Galloway, and the sum of \$12,000 given for about 86 acres, upon which is a very comfortable dwelling house, which cost Dr. Galloway about \$3,500, and a large barn which cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000. The water is pure and comes from large springs and is conveyed by natural flow to a large reservoir about 150 yards from the main building. At the reservoir is a stone building which contains a steam pump, which forces the water to the top of the house, supplying three wooden tanks of 700 gallons capacity each. From these it is distributed throughout the building. . .

The contract for the building was awarded to Messrs. Codling & Lishear on the 15th of January 1872, and as soon as the contract was properly prepared, they went to work, with Jas. C. Harrison, Esq., the Architect, as Superintendent. The buildings the contractors have erected is indeed a credit to them as mechanics. The walls are massive and all the doors and windows have heavy stone lintels over them. The style of architecture is plain and suited to the purposes for which it is to be used. The grove of trees in front of the building when trimmed out will make a pleasant little park.

THE BUILDING

The building is four stories high, the main building being 90 feet 6 inches by 48 feet 6 inches by 42 feet 6 inches, with a basement or cellar. It is covered with a slate roof. There are six rooms, 4 in the main and 2 in the back building, and there are marble wash basins in various portions of the house, each having hot and cold water faucets. Gas pipes have been laid in all the halls and in several of the rooms, and all the principal rooms on the first floor have Italian marble mantels. Every room in the building is provided with a ventilating flue which will carry off any foul air in the building and those with the large corridors and the fourteen dormer windows in the roof form, it is claimed, as thoroughly a ventilated building as there is in the State.

The basement contains 13 rooms, about 15 by 16 feet, in two of which are the steam heating apparatus, put up by Weatherby & Son, of Baltimore. A main hall runs through this story, and underneath are the necessary air ducts. The whole floor of this story is being laid with fine broken stone over which will be laid a layer of cement.

The main floor has two rooms 16 by 36; four rooms 16 by 18; two rooms 14 by 24 and two rooms 14 by 19 feet. The height of the ceiling is 12 feet. The halls are 10 feet wide and run transversely. In the back building is situated the kitchen, store rooms, &c., all wainscoated 5 feet high, the kitchen being provided with Chilson's Cooking Ranges, No. 3, put up by Weatherby & Son, all complete with hot water arrangements.

The second floor has four rooms 15 feet 6 inches by 16 feet 6 inches, four rooms 10 by 15 feet 6 inches, 2 water closets, 2 bath rooms, hall 10 feet wide, and ceiling 11 feet high. The corridor is divided by slat partitions to prevent communication, but which admits of a free circulation of air. In the back building is one room 14 feet 6 inches by 24 feet, one room 14 feet 6 inches by 20 feet, one room 14 feet 6 inches by 19 feet, one room 12 feet 6 inches by 14 feet 5 inches, bath room, water closet, &c.

The third floor is an exact duplicate of the second floor, with the exception that the rooms are somewhat smaller. This whole story is wainscoated 6 feet high and every window is provided with wrought iron shutters securely fastened in the walls. This is intended for the insane department.

The fourth floor is divided into four apartments into which open the fourteen dormer windows. In the halls are the three large water tanks of 700 gallons capacity, the water being pure spring water. Upon the top of the building is the observatory. There are two large wide stairways with walnut hand rails and ash balusters. The work upon both the stairways was put up by Mr. George Hamilton, Mr. Codling's foreman, and is a credit to his mechanical genius. . . .

The whole building has been erected under the careful supervision of Mr. Jas. C. Harrison, the Architect, and it speaks in the highest terms of the contractors, Messrs. Codling & Lishear, to know that they have faithfully carried out their contract, and the building has been erected within the appropriation allowed by the Legislature, \$60,000. Baltimore county has a house of which she may well feel proud. With good care it will last her for very many years.

It is the intention of the Board to move the poor into the new building about the 1st of September, after all the paint shall have been well dried and the house thoroughly cleaned and furnished. (7)

One note of dissent was sounded in a letter to the editor from William M. Isaac who stated that Codling and Lishear had charged too much for both the almshouse and for a recent school building. (8)

The county papers reported in December that the Board of Commissioners had met with the contractors on December 3 and paid them \$56,500 for their

work. The house was by then occupied and the furnaces were fired up and working satisfactorily. The same article called the institution "The Upland Home." (9)

A few years later, the well-designed building was dammed with faint praise in the report of Dr. C. W. Chancellor, Secretary to the State Board of Health. The report proves the existence of the pest house and shows what it was used for:

This institution was fully described in my report of 1877. The building as then noted is defective in several particulars, but its general condition has been somewhat improved.

The building has a capacity for the comfortable accommodation of the more than one hundred inmates, exclusive of the parts occupied by the steward and his family, and the officers. At the date of my visit, it contained 110-72 white males; 21 white females; 4 white children; 9 colored females; 4 colored children. A small two-story stone building of neat appearance accommodated the colored male inmates—6 in number. The sexes are separated at night, but not always in the daytime. The beds are straw with sufficient blankets and quilts to make those who occupy them comfortable. No special infirmary is provided for the sick. The house was not generally in good order; a want of system and tidiness being obvious; but as there has been some improvement since my last visit, it is hoped the spirit of reform will continue until the institution becomes a credit to the county. (10)

There was a Potters Field at the Upland Home as mentioned in an 1885 paper. The building was wired for electric power in 1913 "in place of the gasoline system which has been in use for several years." (11)

A serious fire took place on New Year's Eve of 1918-19. The <u>Sun</u> reported, "Only the stone walls of the four story main building remains, but the east wing in which were store rooms and the kitchen is intact. The inmates are quartered in the pest house on the property and 30 of them will be sent to Bayview Asylum."

The fire started on the roof, as did the one that swept the upper portion of the building on New Year's Day, 1916, and was discovered by Misses Ida and Myrtle Chilcoat and James and Charles Chilcoat, children of the Superintendent and Mrs. John P. Chilcoat, who were returning in an automobile from a dance at Sparks. They saw the blaze as they approached the entrance to the farm and put on speed.

After arousing their parents, they helped rescue the inmates One inmate weighing 200 pounds was carried down two flights of stairs by Walter Jessop, Jr.
Mr. Coghlan [President of Board of County Commissioners] said that the Commissioners had not decided on rebuilding, but would likely take up the question next week. He said that the old structure was too high for its purpose, and that the next building would not be more than two stories.

The fire loss is fully covered by insurance. The origin of the fire is unknown. The institution was visited by fire the first time in 1915. (12)

The inmates whom the city elected to take in were only those who had last lived in the "belt" area recently annexed by Baltimore. One of the young Chilcoat's who had discovered the fire, William James, succeeded his father as superintendent in 1937. The elder Chilcoat had been transferred to the almshouse from his earlier post as jail warden—there was something similar between jails and places for the care of the elderly in official thinking. Some of the poorer counties were still keeping people in conditions of Dickensian horror well into the twentieth century.

Almshouses had been under attack since the administration of Governor Phillips Lee Goldsborough in 1913, but no other solution had been found. In 1937, State Senator Raymond Kennedy wrote a letter to Governor Harry K. Nice denouncing all the State's almshouses in detail. Baltimore County came in for slightly less criticism than other jurisdictions:

BALTIMORE In the main building, the stairway is of wood and rather rickety. The newer half of the building is fireproof ... about 15 years old. Fire doors separate the newer half of the old part of the building, but they would be of little value in a smoke hazard. The danger of fire in the main building is great.

There is no nursing care except that provided by the wife of the farmer who is superintendent of the institution. There is no infirmary (13)

About a year later, Mr. Chilcoat got approval of the Board to improve the diet of his charges:

Sugar for the coffee and more abundant food on the table for the year around was ordered yesterday for inmates of the Baltimore County Almshouse at Texas, when the Board of County Commissioners played Santa Claus to eighty or more aged men and women.

James Chilcoat, superintendent of the institution, appeared before the board in Towson and he was given permission to improve the menu of the "poor farm."

Heretofore, breakfast at the institution consisted principally of unsweetened oatmeal, with milk, coffee and bread, whereas eggs, scrapple, or the like will be added. Dinner served at noon will consist of more ample portions of meats and vegetables.

The evening meal, formerly consisting of bread and tea and a vegetable, will in the future be augmented by hot soups, warm dishes, and desserts.

.... The additional costs entailed by their decision to better the eating conditions at both the almshouse and the jail are expected to be made up out of economies such as the limiting of the use of county automobiles to official purposes only. (14)

In 1943, some 78 persons lived at the home, the oldest person still "earning her keep" in the best tradition of Puritan ethics:

> The oldest is Fannie Williams, a hundred and four year old Negress. Fannie has been a resident at the institution for forty-one years, and until several years ago was active about the place, assisting Mrs. Chilcoat, wife of the superintendent, to keep things tidy, and thereby earning her keep. Now all she does is sit in a wheelchair mending clothes for other occupants of the house on the hill. (15)

Three years later, Mr. Chilcoat found that the pension system was breaking up the old poor-farm gang:

> The county almshouse population is now 55 whereas a few years ago the average was 100 or more. The great majority of the present inmates are men. (16)

Still, it took another 12 years to do away with the institution. in the summer of 1958, some 190 years after the General Assembly had prescribed such institutions, that County Executive Michael J. Birmingham announced closure, noting that the home was too expensive-then costing \$40,000 a year to operate. By placing the inmates in private homes, Federal and State matching funds would bring costs down to \$10 to \$15,000 per annum. The land would provide space for county maintenance shops, a school, and a park. Leaving nothing to imagination, Mr. Birmingham added:

> "Before the construction begins," he continued, "the livestock now on the farm located on this acreage will be slaughtered and turned over to the county jail and other public institutions." (17)

The Baltimore County Historical Society was given two rooms in the building in 1959 and has since then expanded into nine rooms used for museum and library space. The west end of the building was renovated for office space in 1961 under architectural direction of Paul Grubb. Various agricultureoriented offices were moved there from Towson, including the Extension Service, Forest Service, and Soil Service. The meeting room contains equipment for classes in cooking and a number of organizations meet here including beekeepers, genealogical groups, Four-H Clubs, rabbit clubs, Maryland Historical Trust, and garden clubs. The structure was renamed the Agriculture Building in 1961 at the suggestion of Mr. Chilcoat. (18)

Mr. Chilcoat eventually retired but stayed on as unpaid curator of the Historical Society's "farm museum," a collection of vehicles and implements packed into a metal chicken house to the east of the main building. The last keeper of the Almshouse told a newspaper reporter some two years ago that he was finished with giving interviews about old poorhouse days. (19) His final interview resulted in an almshouse tour booklet prepared two years ago by Matilda C. Lacey. Mr. Chilcoat occasionally mentions to his friends some grim story from the past—ingenious forms of suicide, for example—but the detailed history of the place is probably doomed to vanish. Only one former inmate is known to be alive—and she was an honored guest of the Historical Christmas party a few years ago.

The almshouse is a physical survival of a social system where the burial

of the indigent and homeless and the daily care of the utterly destitute came to the personal attention of elected officials at the lowest level of government at almost every meeting of their boards.

NOTES:

- 1. Douglas G. Carroll, Jr. and Blanche D. Coll, "The Baltimore Almshouse, Maryland Historical Magazine, 66 (Summer, 1971): 135-152. Also, advertisement to sell "Calverton," American, April 5, 1821. Journal of proceedings (of County Commissioners), 1868-1874, 2:181, Records Management Office, Towson.
- 2. Journal of Proceedings, 2:181; includes pasted-in map.
- 3. B.C. Deeds, EHA 72:171.
 - 4. Journal of Proceedings, 2:242.
 - 5. Journal of Proceedings, 2:201, 436, 460, 465.
 - 6. Journal of Proceedings, 2:271, 483.
 - 7. Maryland Journal, Towson, July 26, 1873, p. 3, col. 1.
 - 8. Maryland Journal, September 27, 1873, p. 2.
 - 9. Maryland Journal, December 6, 1873, p. 3.
- 10. Maryland Journal, March 13, 1880, p. 3.
- 11. Maryland Journal, August 8, 1885.
- 12. "Almshouse Is Burned," Sun, January 1, 1919, p. 16, col. 4.
- 13. "Almshouses Held Disgrace to Maryland," Sun, October 19, 1937.
- 14. Sun, December 21, 1938 (untitled clipping).
- 15. Jeffersonian, March 19, 1943 (untitled clipping).
- 16. "Poorhouse Inmates Near New Low," Evening Sun, August 1, 1946.
- 17. Donald Klein, Evening Sun, August 12, 1958 (untitled clipping).
- 18. Matilda C. Lacey, The Almshouse (Cockeysville, 1977), p. 15.
- 19. Jake Slagle, "Alms House Stands as Reminder of a Bygone Era," Valley Voice, February 10, 1977, p. 4.

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Matilda C. Lacey, The Almshouse (Cockeysville, Maryland, 1977)

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The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust

The Shaw House, 21 State Circle

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

(301) 267-1438

SE. 1104

0300754501

BA-73

Maryland
Baltimore County
Dist. VIII
Texas

The County Home Property

1872

Formerly the Alms House, now the Agriculture Building; contains various county offices, including Headquarters of the Baltimore County Historical Society.

Approximately 200 acres. A large institutional type, granite stone building; now under the Department of Recreation and Parks.

(First HABS Report)
E. Frances Offutt
HABS COMMITTEE OF BALTIMORE
COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

July 29, 1965